Throughout the following monologue, VOICE OVER, WE WATCH Marion walking down a street in the residential brownstone section of Greenwich Village. She carries or buys a bag of groceries and a bag of stationery materials and perhaps even a portable typewriter. The activities will be measured to accommodate the necessary VOICE OVER.

WE WILL FOLLOW her as she finally enters an old brownstone, walks up a flight or two to the small, furnished flat. She puts away the groceries, in this case, what a person would stock a little office with -- coffee, milk, muffins, club soda. The effect is of someone preparing a room to use as a casual office to work in.

Like any writer, she stalls before getting to work and some of it takes the form of moving around, rearranging the furniture to make herself comfortable.

The apartment is a front one overlooking a nice block.

MARION (VO)
(to accompany the above)

If someone had asked me last month as I reached my fiftieth birthday, to assess my life, I would have said that I had achieved a decent measure of fulfillment both personally and professionally. Beyond that, I would say I don't choose to delve. Not that I was afraid of uncovering some dark side of my character -- quite the opposite -- I'm open and optimistic. I've never been one of those self-absorbed, self-examining, obsessed-with-one's-navel types. Life's too short. If something seems to be working, I say, leave it alone. Don't keep thrusting everything under a microscope. It doesn't pay.

My name is Marion Post. I'm director of undergraduate studies in Philosophy at a very fine, still predominantly women's college.

My credentials are good. Got my Ph.D. at Yale and I've at one time or another served on the faculty of several first class schools.

(MORE)

MARION (VO contd)
I enjoy teaching and I don't mind the administrative work that goes along with heading a department although right now I'm on leave of absence to write a book. It's the second volume of a work on the intellectual development of German thought. The first volume was very well received and I hope I can maintain that same quality.

Personally things seem to be solid. I'm married to a very accomplished physician -- a cardiologist who, ten years ago, examined my heart, liked what he saw and proposed. It's the second marriage for both of us and he brought to it a sixteen-year-old daughter who lives with his former wife but visits us frequently.

She's a sweet girl and I'm flattered by her undisguised idolization of me, though it makes me feel the same as when my students look up to me -- inadequate.

Not much else to say. My husband and I are active in a number of charitable causes.

I have a married brother, my mother died recently but Dad's still alive and healthy.

Normally I do my writing at home but a building has started going up next to ours and the noise is awful. I need absolute quiet to concentrate and Ken suggested I find a little furnished room for a few months where I could go every day and work.

Prices in the city are outrageous and I finally settled for something a lot further from home than I'd wanted. Anyway, there I was, on my first day, loading up with coffee and cigarettes and blank paper.

Marion, throughout the above, has come to work, stopped to buy things if necessary, gone upstairs, rearranged

things and now she goes about the business of the writer settling in.

MARION (VO contd)
I'd forgotten how difficult it was getting acclimated to new surroundings. I was used to my little book lined cubby hole at home.

Finally I began to settle in and think out the beginning which for me is always the hardest part.

And then, an annoying thing happened.

WE'VE BEEN WATCHING her and now we become aware as she becomes aware of some sounds which gradually emerge as a human voice.

MARION (VO contd)
I gradually became aware of a noise.

Marion, suiting action to word, looks up from work and looks around. As she becomes aware she is hearing a voice, we do too.

MARION (VO contd)
Soon it became apparent I was hearing a voice and as I held still and concentrated, it became quite clear.

Now a voice has emerged. A woman's voice coming through the wall, not present but audible. It should be generally ad-libbed, and could be something vaguely like the following:

(Also it could come from the floor, grating radiator, or another source to be determined by the location. The point is, by moving a book case, or opening a closet door, or some logical ruse, she becomes privy to a voice in the next or lower apartment.)

WOMAN'S VOICE
(THROUGH WALL)
I don't have that kind of relation-ship with my son -- we're close but I don't feel I smother him ... it's not that I don't like the girl either ... I feel he hasn't thought it out ... I guess I've never gotten along with the women

(MORE)

WOMAN'S VOICE (contd)
he's brought home ... I've had some terrible dreams about my own mother this week ... where I get separated from her in a crowded store and I can't seem to get back together with her again ... I wake up sad ... and confused ...

DOCTOR'S VOICE
(THROUGH WALL)
And what do you think you're confused about?

The conversation through the wall continues on in its ad-lib fashion and as Marion listens she picks up her narration again.

MARION (VO)
It didn't take long to figure out that when I had shifted the furniture I had apparently uncovered a sensitive spot that rendered the people in the next apartment audible.

Marion listens and we pick up one final strand of ad-lib analysis session.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(THROUGH WALL)
That was when my step-father tried to seduce me ... quite openly ... etc.

Marion tries changing spot to avoid the distraction.

MARION (VO)
While I must admit it had a slightly mesmerizing quality to suddenly find oneself privy to such intensely intimate revelations the distraction was more than I wanted to bear as one patient was replaced by the next.

MAN'S VOICE
(THROUGH WALL. Ad-lib approximately the following)
It was my one experience with another man, and I liked it. I've had fantasies about it ever since ... And I love my wife ... and she's still physically exciting to me ...
(MORE)

MAN'S VOICE (contd)
but so are men. I become aroused by both ... though as I said, I've only acted it out with a man on one occasion ... etc.

Throughout the above, Marion, irritated, is trying to shift her work spot but it doesn't seem to help very much. Now the phone rings. It will be her husband, Ken, at work.

MARION
(on phone)
Hello?

CUT TO:

KEN
(on phone)
Don't mean to disturb but we have Donald's birthday party tonight ... I know -- but it's a must ... I feel the same way but we have to ... What? ... Really? ...

CUT TO:

MARION
(on phone)
I can't believe it. It's infuriating. The couch has to be right near the wall and I can hear all his patients.

CUT TO:

KEN
(on phone)
How amusing. I'm sure one word to the analyst will take care of it quickly. On the other hand, it could be material for a best seller.

CUT TO:

MARION
(on phone)
Now it stopped. Well I have to get this straighted out.

CUT TO:

KEN
(on phone)
You will. And I'm sorry about tonight but we're all at the age that birthdays need moral support.

CUT TO Marion hanging up. The talking has been stopped for awhile now and her coffee pot is percolating. Turning it down, she goes into the hall.

Marion goes to only other apartment on the floor and knocks. No answer. She knocks again. No answer. Looks at her watch. Returns to her room.

CUT TO Marion in her room and settling in once again preparing to write.

MARION (VO)
It took a little while to settle in and focus on my writing after the events of the morning but gradually I relaxed in the tranquil solitude of the room, my concentration returned, and I dug in to difficult business of getting started.

DISSOLVE TO her working some time later and nibbling on sandwich and soda.

DISSOLVE to her now (these can be CUTS as well) in the later afternoon -- light falling a bit -- not darkening, just mood creating.

Her head is down, eyes closed a bit on a rest.

MARION (VO)
I don't remember exactly what time it happened because along in the later afternoon I was feeling bogged down and I guess I got a little drowsy as sometimes happens when I've been concentrating for hours and I closed my eyes -- just to rest for a few minutes -- I guess I dozed off ... I know I
(MORE)

MARION (VO contd)
couldn't have been out very long or very deeply because I was awakened by becoming aware of a voice again -- like this morning's, it was coming through the wall ... It was a woman's voice and it was such an anguished, heart-wrenching sound that I was totally arrested by its sadness.

We make the most of all the above with the CAMERA, playing Marion's face intensely.

She hears a woman's voice weeping and talking.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(THROUGH WALL. Amidst weeping)
I awoke in the middle of the night ... I don't know what awakened me ... a mosquito ... That's how it began ... I couldn't get the buzzing out of my ears and I lay awake in the black ... and I could hear the mosquito ... and I thought if I just lay motionless, it would light on me and sting me and I would kill it ... And as I lay there -- something came over me ... and suddenly everything seemed so unreal to me ... the moonless night -- the silence, punctuated by an occasional buzzing ... And my mind gave in to strange images --

MONTAGE of strange images culiminating in a longer narrative sequence as follows:

Suggested images -- a mixture of shots to be made for use here and later.
An icy white operating room.
EXTREME CLOSE CROPPED couple making love, parts of body only.
Jar of sleeping pills in CLOSE UP, knocked over, spilled.
CLOSE UP of blind woman's face.
Clock.
CLOSE UP of black panther.
More will come.

SHOT of empty streets like in a surreal painting.
Car parked on side. A woman is in it. She is sweating, fumbling in glove compartment for road maps which give her trouble in reading.

Presently she sees an ominous figure in her rear view mirror. The figure comes closer to the car. The woman rolls up the windows and locks them and door. The figure tries to get into the car. The woman tries frustratingly as in a dream to start the car and as it jerks and sputters, WE CUT TO Marion's face, listening rapt and sweating.

WOMAN'S VOICE (contd)
(THROUGH WALL)
I sat up -- my heart was beating ... And I looked at my husband asleep next to me -- and it was as if I didn't know who he was ... Suddenly nothing seemed real to me anymore... and I started to perspire and get short of breath ... and I got up and went into the other room ... it was all so strange ... nothing around me rang true ... nothing ... And I saw my own shadow fall across the wall and I couldn't recognize myself ... My swollen, incomprehensible silhouette ...
(weeps)
And I realized -- in one tiny fraction of clarity -- that my life is such a lie ... And I can't see the difference anymore. It's my own existence that stands between me and reality ... and so, for the first time I had thoughts of ending everything ...

Marion needs a glass of water or a cigarette. She is short of breath. She opens window to inhale. She hears the next door open -- she runs to peep hole to look and see the woman. It doesn't work. She goes to window and sees the woman exit building and go down stairs and walk down block. The woman is younger than she is and pregnant.

MARION (VO)
I was so distracted by what I had heard and touched in a very deep way, I was actually a bit dizzy and could never have gone back to work. By this time it was five o'clock and I needed fresh air.

CUT TO her walking.

MARION (VO contd)
Once outside in the cold air I began to feel calmer but it was difficult to get that woman out of my mind. I didn't really feel like going to a birthday party but I thought once I got there I'd get into the swing of it.

CUT TO party in swing. Music.
A few CUTS of people partying.
We begin picking up atmosphere dialogue, a group that Marion is in.

JIM
Malcolm is a fox.

RITA
Right but Peter's a hedgehog.

JIM
And Sophie is a hedgehog.

FRED
Really? I'd say Sophie's a fox.

BILL
No -- Sophie's sister is a fox -- but Sophie and Jay are both hedgehogs.

MARION
Now my father, whose subject was history, used two other categories. You were either a Thucydides person or a Herodotus person.

FRED
And what were you?

MARION
Oh God help you if you were a Herodotus person.

RITA
See? God help you -- you invoke God -- it's part of the language.

MARION
That was my point. Harold writes a book advocating atheism and then prays that it sells.

They laugh. Ken, her husband, comes over.

KEN
I'll have to interrupt you from holding court -- it's time for the birthday boy.

CUTS of the cake coming out and general conviviality.

Donald cuts cake amidst general ad-lib partying.

DONALD
It is with a mixture of some joy but mostly paralyzing anxiety that I hereby plunge into the big five-oh.

GRACE
Fifty is nothing. I have an aunt and uncle who've been married longer than fifty years. They've been man and wife longer than you've been alive.

MARION
Please -- I know how he feels.

DONALD
I was fine till last week. Then my son said, "Gee, Dad -- don't your options begin running out?"

Laughter and giving out cake, etc.

CUT TO later party going on, music.

KEN
(with Marion in a foursome)
I was telling Lydia about your adventure today.

LYDIA
Those new buildings are built so thin -- you can hear everything.

MARION
But this is an old brownstone.

MARK
(drinking pretty good)
There's no more privacy left. Last week Lydia and I were home alone. It was Sunday morning ...

LYDIA
Mark --

MARK
It's true. And we started kissing each other and damned if I didn't have her right on the floor in the living room.

LYDIA
Mark's drunk.

MARK
Did it not happen this way? The door opened --

LYDIA
(laughs despite herself)
I must admit -- it was a surprise.

MARK
And our superintendent, who has the key, just barges in ... Some plumbing leak ... Meanwhile we're in flagrante delecto ...

LYDIA
Enough, Mark.

MARK
I mean the God damn superintendent, Mr. Banducci.

LYDIA
So Mark looked up, stark naked and said, "Mr. Banducci, this is not the pipe that needs fixing."

MARK
Now that's pretty fast under those circumstances. Could you have come up with something like that, Ken? That was what I call grace under pressure.

KEN
Did he laugh?

MARK
He turned red, then redder, then total tomato colored ... and he backed out ... Nobody respects privacy anymore ... that was my original point, wasn't it?

CUT TO a group singing "Happy Birthday," then
CUT TO Ken and Marion at home undressing that night.

MARION
What'd you say?

KEN
Nothing ... Say, where are you?
You seem so distracted.

MARION
No, I'm just tired.

KEN
You drank more than usual tonight.

MARION
(Pausing during ablutions)
Maybe because I was a little bored.

KEN
Really? You seemed to be enjoying
yourself.

MARION
It's my social mask. I use it
to raise money for the school.

KEN
Y'know I forgot to ask Mark and
Lydia if they want to renew our
opera box again.

Lights out.

KEN (contd)
Ohh ... Hope we get a chance to
go more often this season ... Last
year was so busy ...

Marion gets into bed ... they nuzzle ... Tentative sexual moves that never ignite.

KEN (contd)
I think I had a little too much to
drink too.

Pause -- they lay there.

MARION
Would you ever think of making love
to me on the living room floor?

KEN
Would you want me to?

MARION
I don't know ... would you want to?

KEN
Somehow I don't see you as the hardwood floor type.

MARION
No?

KEN
Marion -- I'm shot ... Besides, Mark and Lydia have that shaggy carpet. We've got those thin Persian rugs.

With this they call it a night...
HOLD on her.
CUT TO middle of night.

MARION (VO)
That night I slept fitfully. This was a recent development for me. For years I was used to sleeping the sleep of the just. Lately I had been troubled by dreams and restlessness. I remember lying in the bed at three a.m. exhausted but awake.

A buzzing sound, like a mosquito. She checks bed clock.

Finally she rises, goes into other room, eventually in some form, the pregnant woman appears. Perhaps in the mirror or down the hall. Marion stares. The woman is unconcerned but looks stressful. Marion goes to her. She touches her face -- and eventually speaks.

MARION
In what way did you mean when you said you were living a lie? How? Not being truthful with people? Deceiving yourself? It happens without you knowing it. You begin when you're young and eventually you create a face for yourself and you become it ... We have so many ways of insulating ourselves from reality ... not seeing who we are or what we're

(MORE)

MARION (contd)
doing to other people ... I understood your fantasies and they frightened me ... but you mustn't panic ... you're not alone ...

She tries to comfort her physically ... The woman retreats and gradually vanishes as Marion drops off to sleep in the chair ...

CUT TO next morning. Showering, dressing hurriedly.

KEN
You were so restless last night ... you were tossing, then you got up.

MARION
I'm probably tense over starting a book. Oh hell, is it eight-fifteen already ... I'm supposed to have breakfast with my sister-in-law or ex-sister-in-law -- or future ex-sister-in-law. No matter how you say it, I'd rather not go.

KEN
You can cut it short. She knows you're a busy person.

MARION
I'll try. I don't want to be rude.

KEN
I may have a conference tonight with Dr. Bodian so you may have to make apologies for me to your father and Laura.

CUT TO Lynn, the sister-in-law, waiting. She looks up and Marion is coming to her. A restaurant probably.

LYNN
Thanks for coming. I know you're busy.

MARION
That's ok. Did you have any problem finding the place?

LYNN
No. Paul and I have come here before. But that was a long time ago.

MARION
(awkward)
I can never think of where to meet.
(awkward pause)
Well -- you're looking good.

LYNN
Can I come right to the point?

MARION
Of course.

LYNN
I need to borrow some money.

MARION
Uh-huh.

LYNN
You know Paul and I are getting a divorce and there are a lot of expenses and unpaid bills and you know he hasn't anything.

MARION
Well sure I'll help. Why didn't he ask me?

LYNN
He wouldn't.

MARION
Why not? He always has.

LYNN
But he's decided not to again.

MARION
That's absurd. I don't mind.

LYNN
But he knows what you think of him.

MARION
What does that mean?

LYNN
Look, I didn't mean to get into a discussion about Paul.

MARION
I've never turned him down -- ever.

LYNN
Yes it's true. You've always been there for him financially.

MARION
What are you saying?

LYNN
How can you expect me to be frank -- I'm here to ask for money.

MARION
I said I'd lend it. You can be totally direct with me. I'd prefer it.

LYNN
It's astonishing that you don't understand that your brother hates you.

MARION
Lynn -- are you serious?

LYNN
You're such a brilliant, perceptive woman -- how could you not see it?

MARION
I'm sorry but I don't accept that.

LYNN
Then why do you think he's not here. Or that he's stopped calling you months ago -- or haven't you noticed?

MARION
I had heard you two were going through a difficult period.

LYNN
Then why didn't you call him to see if he needed help?

MARION
I just assumed he'd call if he did -- like always. I didn't want to intrude.

LYNN
I'm sorry for telling you this but you said to be honest.

MARION
I always tried to make him feel that my money was his -- but I guess being financially dependent inevitably leads to bad feelings.

LYNN
It's not just money, although having to come to you with one failed venture after another is demoralizing.

MARION
He'll find himself eventually. I have complete faith in him.

LYNN
I'm not so sure. I think more likely he's always existed somewhere in your shadow. And he knows it.

MARION
Then I believe in him more than either of you two do.

LYNN
You're not realistic. You think what you want to think but my husband drifts from one job to another and nothing adds up.

MARION
It will. He needs a break. There's terrific things inside Paul.

LYNN
No. You fill his head with pipe dreams because you want him to be something he'll never be and it kills him because he wants to please you.

MARION
He does please me and don't say I fill him with pipe dreams just because I encourage him to strive.

LYNN
Marion -- you're contemptuous of him. You help him financially but you keep him at arm's length. You think you hide it but it comes out so obviously.

MARION
How can you say that?

LYNN
How can you not see it?

MARION
I love him.

LYNN
You're ashamed of him. You and your husband and your high toned, literate friends. Doctors, intellectuals. Do you ever invite him to your home? Do you ever include him? You've got a niece and a nephew -- do you ever see them?

MARION
Yes.

LYNN
Hardly ever. Twice a year -- if that. You send a few pretty presents but it's all merchandise. The kids know they have an accomplished aunt but you're never with them. How else can Paul see it? You're the star of the family and he's had to deal with it his whole life.

MARION
It's amazing how you all misunderstand me. If Paul is frustrated he mustn't fall into the trap of taking it out on me. That way he conveniently avoids the real problem. That he doesn't have the patience and the resolve to see his ideas through. He becomes intimidated when the stakes are large and I somehow become the scapegoat.

LYNN
You still don't understand. It's too bad. I wish I could help you. I like you. I always found you charming ... I regretted the fact that we never got close. It wasn't for my lack of trying.

MARION
Well look -- it's silly to get sidetracked. I'll bring you a check -- how much do you need?

LYNN
Is three thousand dollars possible?

MARION
Of course.

LYNN
Thank you. I'm sorry but you said to be direct.

CUT TO Marion in her writing room. She paces intermittently.

MARION (VO)
There were no distracting voices that day until the late afternoon when I gradually became aware once again of the woman's voice.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(THROUGH WALL)
Yesterday I said I awoke in the night and looked at my husband and it was as if I didn't know him ... Lately I've had odd feelings about my marriage ... They seemed to have just come on me ... It's always been a good marriage ... I'm sure these feelings will pass ... but they contribute to some sense that I've been living a lie.

We have been on Marion's face. INSTANT MEMORY CUT. Ten years ago -- the country -- like Sneeden's Landing or Tuxedo Park. The sounds of laughter and talk. A barbecue or lawn party. Music. A few atmospheric SHOTS.

A younger Marion wanders somewhere in the location.

Behind the house -- by the barn, rose gardens, whatever. She is there alone and is come upon by Larry.

LARRY
What are you thinking?

MARION
Oh. You know when you're staring off at a sunset like this -- you
(MORE)

MARION (contd)
get teased into sensing that you can almost penetrate nature -- that the universe is about to reveal some secret about itself -- Jorge Luis Borges writes about it.

LARRY
Ah but it only tantalizes.

MARION
Yes -- it keeps its secrets -- if it indeed has any. If it all isn't simply that what you see is what you get.

LARRY
I didn't mean to interrupt a peak moment.

MARION
You're not. Those moments are even better if they're shared.

LARRY
I, on the other hand, was given to baser thoughts. I was in the middle of a conversation with Kitty Fox about Italian wines and I saw you wander off and I thought it would be a good place to kiss you.

MARION
Don't you dare.

LARRY
I can't resist.

MARION
Larry, please --

LARRY
It's no use, I'm completely in love with you.

MARION
I don't want to hear that.

LARRY
And I have been since that afternoon in the rain. Standing in the doorway all wet you looked so dazzling.

MARION
Please don't ...

LARRY
Don't tell me it meant nothing to you.

MARION
It was very pleasant.

LARRY
It was more than pleasant.

He grabs her and kisses her, she resists but part of her kisses back, then she backs off, looks around angry and guilty.

MARION
Stop it! Now. I'm marrying Ken and that's all there is to it.

LARRY
How can you marry Ken when you love me?

MARION
You're so self-centered. What makes you think I love you?

KEN
I know because some things one feels so surely.

MARION
Well you're wrong. I'm sorry if I've misled you.

LARRY
It's you, you're misleading.

MARION
I'm surprised at you. Ken is your close friend.

LARRY
I love everything about you and I want you to come and live with me in Santa Fe.

He tries to kiss her again -- she fights it off.

MARION
Stop -- go away ...

Now there is a call for lunch as the barbecue is ready.

CUT TO outdoor lunch. A slight tension when we play Marion and Larry. Marion is with Ken.

Play atmosphere for barbecue -- ad-lib chunks with the following suggests bits and pieces to start with.

NELSON
You can eat all the meat you want, it's in the genes. If your parents didn't die of it, you won't.

CORA
There has to be more smoke in this than in cigarettes.

NELSON
Listen, I'm not going to live on parsley ...

CUT TO more ad-libs and bit two:

OLIVER
I love him like a brother -- David Greenglass.

CUT TO more ad-libs.

CUT TO George who is in charge of setting off some fireworks.

He does.

GIDEON
Not now -- wait till it gets dark.

GEORGE
I want to do a few now and the big ones when it gets darker.

Fireworks go off -- play this -- the faces of the crowd enjoy it but Marion and Larry have their own thoughts -- particularly him.

BERTHA
I'm so sick of everybody's potential. I'd like to see something happen.

All the above are merely notes to myself and subjects to give the actors to play with.

ED
(toasting)
To Ken and Marion on their big day next week.

KITTY
And to Marion's book. German Philosophy will never be the same.

MARION
Let's hope not.

TOM
Kant will always survive but Heidegger definitely got what he deserved.

Laughter.

JANE
It's great marrying a doctor. You can get all your cancer check-ups during foreplay.

Laughter.

KEN
(toasting)
A toast -- to -- to -- good health and happiness ...

They drink.

KITTY
Aren't you going to drink to Marion?

KEN
I drink to her with my eyes.

Laughter, drinks, eventually a car pulls up, they all stop and watch as Ken's ex-wife steps out with a package. The festivities come to a halt as with the appearance of a bad dream.

KATHY
I was just returning some things. Stop staring. I'm not a ghost. We did spend a number of years and had a child together in this house, Ken.

He's with "them" in a her versus "them" set up.

KEN
I wish you'd have called, Kathy.

KATHY
That's ok -- I'm not staying ... although some of these people used to be my friends too.

KITTY
Would you like a drink?

KATHY
(admonishingly)
Kitty --

KATHY
You don't have to panic -- I'm not accepting.
(the carton)
Artifacts from more civilized days between us.

KEN
I think you should leave them and go.

KATHY
Which one's Marion?

MARION
I am.

KEN
Kathy, this is in terrible taste.

KATHY
My ex-husband is an authority on taste. What does Emily Post say about sodomy with a Philosophy professor in a Holiday Inn while your wife is having her ovaries removed?

KEN
That's enough. Please leave. I realize you're hurt -- if I've done wrong, forgive me. I accept your condemnation.

He goes to escort her off, she slaps him awkwardly and he forcibly escorts her to car never losing his dignity.

STAY WITH Marion. The crowd embarrassedly gets back to uncomfortable buzzing.

Amidst the ad-libs we hear:

KITTY
Poor Ken.

TOM
She was always so unstable --
even with the lithium.

KITTY
The man is a saint to have put
up with it for as long as he did.

LARRY
(who has gotten off
privately to some
degree with Marion)
Is there nothing I can say that
will change your heart?

MARION
I'm surprised at you. You're
his friend. He's had an embarrassing
experience.

LARRY
Yes, he's my friend and I love
him, but he's such a prig. He's
cold and stuffy. Can't you see
it? "I accept your condemnation."
Jesus.

MARION
He handled a very difficult moment
quite well.

LARRY
Too well. Is that what you like?
He's a snob you know.

MARION
He's a wonderful man and a terrific
doctor and he's honorable and
cultivated and I like to be with
him and listen to music with him
and talk about books and exchange
ideas.

LARRY
It's cerebral. It's all up here.

MARION
And he's sexy.

LARRY
Sodomy at the Holiday Inn. I guess he gets points for that.

MARION
He'd never try to undermine you.

LARRY
Not even if he loved a woman passionately.

MARION
This is not the jungle -- we deal with our passions.

LARRY
Maybe I'm wrong about you. Maybe you're two of a kind.

MARION
Maybe we should join the others.

LARRY
Maybe this conversation is scaring you.

MARION
Maybe you've had too much champagne.

LARRY
Maybe you'd rather talk about books and music.

MARION
I have to go.

LARRY
(angrily)
Then go.

CUT TO Marion's face in present. A look of longing.

She hears the woman's VO from next room.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(THROUGH WALL)
I wonder often about real love -- or should I say I keep myself from thinking of it ... I don't mean the kind I've settled for -- but something more intense -- then I become frightened ... Because I feel too much ... I'm
(MORE)

WOMAN'S VOICE (contd)
like an open wound ... I'm cursed with too much feeling. Those of us who seem the coldest feel the most and are forced to go to great lengths to suppress it or it will swallow me up.

CUT TO Marion's face. She gets a drink of water.

The bell rings. Marion is startled, she answers it.

It is Laura, her 17-year-old step-daughter.

LAURA
Expecting someone else?

MARION
Oh ... no ...

LAURA
I was supposed to pick you up at five, wasn't I?

MARION
Yes -- yes ... you know your dad's not coming ...

LAURA
I know. I spoke to him. Are you ok?

MARION
Huh? Yes ... I'm fine ...

LAURA
We should leave right now -- we can still beat the traffic.

CUT TO exterior. Car heading to Marion's father's home up West Side Drive or to Jersey, whatever we choose.

CUT TO inside car, the two women talk.

MARION
So how's it going? I haven't seen you in a while.

LAURA
I'm great. I've been having a terrific time. I loved Paris and adored London and my French is now fluent.

MARION
Are you still seeing that same boy friend?

LAURA
Who? Arthur? Or did you meet David? Anyhow I'm seeing Scott. He's an anthropology major. Arthur and I had a falling out.

MARION
That's too bad.

LAURA
I don't know how someone could feel so strongly about me one week and the next week lose those feelings, and feel them about someone else. He likes his old girl friend who also likes Scott. Of course we all are young. I'm sure when one gets older the answers to all those questions about relationships become clearer.

MARION
(has to smile at that one)
Did you decide on college?

LAURA
I'm thinking of Columbia because they have a good philosophy department. Did you always know you wanted to teach philosophy?

MARION
Not really. I started studying philosophy to please my father and only later grew to love it.

LAURA
I must say I didn't do too well with my paper on St. Augustine.

MARION
No?

LAURA
I found him complicated and I felt he ruined his arguments with a lot of illogical contradictions.

MARION
That's one of the great things about Augustine. He doesn't avoid those contradictions. His thinking thrives on the very tension of the contradictions. If he resolved them his existential substance would be empty. Remember, he's an ecclesiastical thinker and when he says the world is good, he actually means that evil is good too.

LAURA
I don't know how you follow it ... could you always follow Spinoza's thought and Schopenhauer?

MARION
If you take the time and apply yourself, their ideas are clear. And very stimulating. If you're going to live in this world you may as well try to understand it.

LAURA
Right. The unexamined life is not worth living.

MARION
I believe that.

CUT TO parent's home. CAMERA PANS over the decor as we hear her father's voice talking.

FATHER
I've gathered a number of your mother's possessions, some mementos -- pictures, letters. You may as well have them.

WE COME to them all.

FATHER (contd)
I can't seem to bring myself to throw them away.

MARION
Has it been unbearable these last months?

FATHER
I've managed to keep busy.

MARION
I wish you'd consider moving to the city.

FATHER
I'm fine right here. Clara comes in -- she cooks and cleans as she has always done, so that's no different. And I still have my work -- and twice a year the Board of the Smithsonian meets -- I get down to Washington -- that takes some time. I'm outlining a book on the Eisenhower years. I'm fine, really.

MARION
But you want nothing around to even remind you of Mother.

FATHER
There are times when even an historian should not look at the past. It's funny ... sometimes I still wonder if she had gone to a doctor sooner, if things might've been different. For months she kept saying it was nothing ... just her ulcer ... and even right up to the end she wouldn't believe it was fatal ... not until the final stages did she accept the reality of it ...

LAURA
Do you think at your age you could ever meet someone and fall in love again?

FATHER
One hopes at my age one has built up an immunity.

MARION
Are you aware that Paul and Lynn are getting a divorce?

FATHER
Nothing Paul does surprises me. I'd just as soon not hear about him.

MARION
He's had bad luck.

FATHER
He's had the same chances you've had. It's that he doesn't have it inside him to stick to anything. I hope you're not still giving him money.

MARION
Now and then.

FATHER
Well I wouldn't. I've bailed him out of enough financial schemes and lost more than I care to tell you doing it. Some day he'll defraud somebody in one of those so-called business ventures and he'll go to jail.

Clara brings box of mementos.

CLARA
Here it is.

Rummages through a few pieces of jewelry, letters, photos ...

CLARA (contd)
(sotto voce)
He doesn't care to be reminded of your mother.

MARION
(going through box)
Her jewelry such as it is ... they were never ones for sentimental possessions ... Her bound edition of Rilke's poems -- she introduced me to German poetry.
(photos)
There's my mother ... and there's Aunt Anna ... and Uncle Charles ... and there I am ... with my painting ... that's when I won the art prize ...

LAURA
I didn't know you painted.

CLARA
She was good.

MARION
That was long ago -- another life. Your age.

LAURA
That would have been neat -- to be a painter.

MARION
Oh God -- Dad would have had a fit. That was no life for a promising young student.
(photo)
There's my mother's sister and her husband.

CUT TO them live in their original location.

MARION (VO)
They're dead. He used to wear a little black hairpiece and put it on with spirit gum every day.

They have demonstrated the above live.

CUT TO live -- two kids in Halloween costumes.

LAURA (VO)
What's that?

MARION (VO)
That's my brother and me on Halloween ... I can't remember how old I was. I'm supposed to be the Statue of Liberty.

CUT TO another live scene.

MARION (VO contd)
There's my mother -- she never liked to be disturbed when she was practicing.

The mother practices Mozart on piano -- little Marion looks on from distance daring not to disturb.

CUT TO Cousin Lucy live. She is with Cousin Andrew.

CUT TO Claire and little Marion in amateur theatrics.

MARION (VO)
And there's my friend Claire --
(MORE)

MARION (VO contd)
My God, Claire ... where are they now? We used to put on plays together ... I've lost touch ...

CLARA (VO)
Marion was the cutest little girl. The best was the house in Connecticut.

CUT TO the Connecticut house. It could be Jersey or Westchester.

MARION (VO)
Yes, those were wonderful years.

CLARA (VO)
It was always full of children.

MARION (VO)
It's true. All my cousins and friends ... we all laughed and played together ... Lately I've had such feelings of nostalgia.

CLARA (VO)
Every Fall we'd make that picnic ... remember? Your brother and your cousin Andrew and Sonya and David and little Julie and Claire -- by the park ...

MARION (VO)
It always smelled so smokey and autumnal. There's Aunt Anna and Uncle Charles ... and my cousin Martin and Christina ... look how young Clara looks ... my mother ...

The mother -- a cool figure in white who waves from a distance.

DOCTOR
(live scene -- to little Marion)
Your mother's not feeling too well today ... she needs rest and fresh air.

MARION (VO)
I used to sit with my cousin Andrew and my friend Claire and listen for hours to Mahler.

Seeing them do this.

LAURA (VO)
I'm going to make sure I always keep in contact with my friends.

MARION (VO)
Yes. Things get in the way but it's worth the effort. As you get older you begin to feel a void.

FATHER (YOUNG)
(to young Paul)
Paul, I want to discuss something with you.

PAUL
Yes, Dad?

FATHER
I spoke to my brother Ben and he's going to find a position for you next season with his firm.

PAUL
I don't want to work in a cardboard box factory.

FATHER
It's paper products -- it's not just boxes.

PAUL
But I tried once. I go nuts.

FATHER
There are obligations one must accept. This has not been a good year. Your mother's been ill and I've decided to take time off to finish my study on the Continental Congress and it's important we have enough to see that Marion can go away to college. I want her to take advantage of that scholarship. She's such a brilliant girl.

PAUL
But I had other plans.

FATHER
I'm sure those other plans included card playing and time wasting.

PAUL
That's not fair.

FATHER
Your grades are mediocre. Not because you're not smart but because you don't apply yourself.

PAUL
I know. And Marion's a genius.

FATHER
She has a chance to go to Yale. Do you want to prevent her?

PAUL
No.

FATHER
That girl is going to be something. She's got what it takes. There's no limits for her. If I can get her to stop daydreaming in the woods with her beloved water colors. What? Oh, coming, Mary ... be right there.

He goes. Paul, alone, begins venting anger by breaking something. Young Marion comes over.

MARION (YOUNG)
What's wrong?

PAUL
He's making me go to work in Ben's box factory.

MARION
What do you want to do?

PAUL
I don't know -- move out of the house -- travel ... find some interesting business with a friend ... explore, invest, dig for gold, drill for oil, I don't know ... Anything but work in a paper box factory ... I hate him. Both of them ... They live in their own world.

CUT TO Marion looking at photos with Laura.

MARION
Dad, do you really want none of this? Not even this wedding photo?

FATHER
Take it all, Marion -- please -- take everything.

CUT TO car driving back to town on highway.

CUT TO them driving in town ... downtown.

MARION
Am I dropping you home?

LAURA
Are you kidding? It's not even ten. I'm meeting Scott.

MARION
Where?

LAURA
Two blocks up. Prince Street. Why don't you come with me. He'd love to meet you. I've told him all about you.

MARION
Some other time. I'm tired and I'm sure he wants to be alone with you.

LAURA
Come for one beer. You'll be home early. Dad won't be home yet.

Marion notices the woman. She's walking somewhere.

LAURA (contd)
What is it? You see someone?

MARION
(trying to stay with her driving)
Er -- I do -- yes ...

LAURA
Who?

MARION
Oh -- that woman ... an acquaintance.

LAURA
Hey -- that's a one-way street.

MARION
Oh gee ...

LAURA
You'll have to go around. Look, why don't you let me out. I'll be at Freddy's Bar and if you feel like, you can join.

MARION
Ok -- but don't count on it.

LAURA
(getting out)
Ok -- and thanks -- I had a terrific time.

Marion pulls off in hopeful pursuit of the woman.

We do a sequence where Marion finds her, tracks her, follows, loses her, finds her. Finally Marion slams car to a halt in a parking place, even illegal if necessary. She exits and pursues on foot.

Throughout the above we may want the following VO.

MARION (VO)
My curiosity was feverish. I must've seemed crazy to Laura as I pulled away trying to find the woman. The urge to follow her was uncontrollable -- to find out more about her -- who she was -- where she lived -- what she did ...

Marion follows and loses her and re-finds her like in a bad dream -- she finally follows her to a place and she runs into her old friend, Claire, coming out backstage of a small off-Broadway theatre. The woman is gone, having led her there.

CLAIRE
Marion? Is that you?

MARION
Ohmigod -- Claire ...

Ad-lib surprises over meeting ... Claire doesn't gush but is quiet surprised.

MARION (contd)
I was just talking about you.

CLAIRE
Yes?

MARION
I was going through some old photos at my father's. What are you doing here?

CLAIRE
Our show is closing.

MARION
You're in a show?

CLAIRE
I guess you don't read the theatre section of the paper.

MARION
Well yes -- but I had no idea.

CLAIRE
(introducing a man who has followed her out)
This is my husband -- and director -- Jack ...

Ad-lib hello's.

MARION
My goodness ... I've wondered about you so often.

CLAIRE
Yes? We live in Monterey.

MARION
Shall we have a drink?

CLAIRE
We're meeting some people.

JACK
No -- we have time till our appointment.

They go to bar ...

CUT TO them an hour later drinking ...

MARION (VO)
(to cover transition)
I hadn't seen Claire in so many years. And I did read something
(MORE)

MARION (VO contd)
about the play she was in. How could I have missed her name. I surely would have gone to see it if I had known. We talked and drank for an hour or more and I was glad to see her -- but then something unpleasant occurred.

JACK
I see -- and you're active with Amnesty International and the American Civil Liberties Union ...

CLAIRE
Marion always had an urge to save humanity. She was a big famine fund raiser.

MARION
Was? My husband and I still do.

JACK
Where do you find the time? And you head the philosophy department? I had two years of Philosophy before I was asked to leave the University of Chicago. God, Claire, you never told me about this chapter in your life.

CLAIRE
I thought I had.

MARION
We were so close. It was always clear she was going to be a gifted actress.

CLAIRE
No --

MARION
Don't believe her. This woman always had that flair.

JACK
Do you get to the theatre much? I guess not with your schedule.

MARION
I do. My husband prefers the opera but there's so little to see. I used to be a devoted Brechtian.

JACK
I staged some Brecht.

MARION
Did you?

JACK
Mother Courage.

MARION
Not the one here?

JACK
Yes. Did you see it?

MARION
It was the most intelligent rendering of that play I'd ever seen -- the only thing I quarreled with was the translation. I'd have put some of those speeches differently.

JACK
Exactly -- the translation was awkward.

MARION
But you did a terrific job ...

CLAIRE
(drunk, she confronts her husband)
Hey -- look at me once in awhile. I'm your wife, not her.

JACK
Huh?

CLAIRE
I mean it. You've been hanging on her every word since we sat down.

JACK
Darling, you're embarrassing me.

CLAIRE
My husband is very impressed by certain things which I apparently can't give him.

MARION
Claire, take it easy.

CLAIRE
Well do you deny he's been staring into your eyes for an hour? I don't think you've heard a word I've said.

JACK
You're a little drunk.

CLAIRE
If you'd rather be alone with her, say so.

MARION
Claire -- stop. This is foolish. We were having a nice chat.

CLAIRE
Don't play so innocent. This wouldn't be the first time it's happened.

MARION
What does that mean?

JACK
Stop this -- let's go, Claire. I'm sorry, Marion.

CLAIRE
We've been in this situation before where you've so innocently wound up causing me to doubt my whole life.

JACK
Claire, you're being awfully theatrical.

MARION
I don't know what you're talking about.

CLAIRE
We didn't just drift apart, Marion. I withdrew.

MARION
You're not thinking of David?

CLAIRE
Then you do know.

MARION
I know that I never had the slightest interest in him.

CLAIRE
You knew how much I cared for him.

MARION
I never had anything to do with him. And I never gave him a shred of encouragement.

CLAIRE
Yes -- that's not true. Your conversations were full of subtle flirtation -- full of meaningful looks and little gambits designed to seduce.

MARION
It's so untrue -- and you've held that against me?

CLAIRE
Because he couldn't see straight except how infatuated with you he was.

MARION
We never spent a single moment alone. I never had anything to do with him.

CLAIRE
And I say you seduced him. You turned it on when he was around. Maybe you didn't even know you were doing it.

JACK
Claire, let's get off the subject.

CLAIRE
I seemed very bland to him after he met you.

MARION
This is nonsense. To have backed off from a close friendship because of some fantasy.

CLAIRE
I'm sure I brought it on myself.
(MORE)

CLAIRE (contd)
I was so proud of you. You were my best friend and so witty and quick. I was so naive. Of course you'd want David to fall for you. He was exceptional.

MARION
But I never accepted his overtures. I told him he was going with you and it was out of the question.

CLAIRE
By then you had what you wanted.

MARION
That's absurd.

CLAIRE
I really believe you may not have realized what you were doing.

JACK
This is outrageous. You should never drink. I apologize and I'm crestfallen.

MARION
I swear it was never on my mind ... not consciously or sub-consciously or any way ...

CLAIRE
Think about it sometime. You should be the actress.

The scene ends and WE CUT TO Marion entering the apartment. She is exhausted.

She undresses. Ken is asleep. She examines herself in the mirror.

She gets into bed.

CUT TO Marion in bed sleeping.

MARION (VO)
When I got back home, Ken was asleep. I lie awake thinking about Claire's accusations. Could I have been seductive to Claire's great love -- would I have been so self-centered to want to make
(MORE)

MARION (VO contd)
a man attracted to me when I really couldn't care that deeply about him? And would I have been blind to Claire's feelings toward him? And later towards me?

She takes book.

MARION (VO contd)
I tried reading myself to sleep but it didn't work. I thumbed through my mother's edition of Rilke. When I was sixteen I had done a paper on the image that the panther saw and that image was death ... Then I saw my mother's favorite poem -- Archaiic Torso of Apollo. There were stains on the page which I believed were her tears -- they fell on the last line: "For here there is no place that does not see you. You must change your life."

CUT TO next day. Morning ablutions.

KEN
You got in late last night.

MARION
Yes -- because I ran into an old friend. And then I didn't sleep. I don't think I shut my eyes for a minute.

KEN
I don't know how you do it. I would collapse. And we have Mark and Lydia tonight.

MARION
I'm good for a day -- tomorrow I'll feel it.

KEN
Now tomorrow we're taking Tom and Eleanor to Le Cirque and Friday Mark and Lydia are taking us out for our anniversary.

MARION
I haven't gotten you a present yet.

KEN
Please don't waste your time. I have everything I need.

MARION
That's what I always tell you. But at least you can always give me a book.

KEN
Well you can always get me an opera.

CUT TO Marion at library.

MARION (VO)
I had some research to do and stopped off to use the library.

WE SEE this and she runs into a colleague, Peter.

PETER
Marion -- what are you doing here?

MARION
Peter ... hello ... Had to look something up.

PETER
How's the book coming?

MARION
Er -- slowly --

PETER
Everything on the faculty is exactly the same -- you're missing nothing.

MARION
Uh-huh.

PETER
Oh I finally met Brinner. Frankly I was disappointed. The man has no ideas.

MARION
Uh-huh ...

PETER
And Nathanson and his wife broke up. Can you blame her? He was sleeping with everyone on campus.
(MORE)

PETER (contd)
He came home one day -- she had packed all her things and was gone -- no note -- just in his bed she left a tangerine. Only he understands the symbolism.

MARION
I'm a little late.

PETER
Well go ahead. Oh Emery Ford got the linguistics chair -- we were discussing Viennese culture -- I told him your wonderful line -- cheer, cheer for old Alma Mahler -- he thought it was great.

MARION
I must go -- nice seeing you ...

They split, she mutters to herself.

MARION (contd)
My God -- you must change your life.

CUT TO her in writing room.

MARION (VO)
That day I found it difficult to concentrate and I kept looking out the window. The truth was I was waiting for the woman to come so I could eavesdrop again. It was becoming the center of my existence.

CUT TO later in day.

MARION (VO contd)
Along about four I saw her enter. I unblocked the grating -- [whatever our gimmick is] and listened. I could hear the clock ticking and the faucet dripping but she was silent. After what seemed an eternity I heard something.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
You're silent today. Usually you're quite talkative.

WOMAN'S VOICE
I have nothing to say.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
Uh-huh ...

Silence ... Marion becomes edgy.

WOMAN'S VOICE
I have nothing to report.

Silence.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
Are you angry?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Not that I'm aware of.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
But you have nothing to say.

WOMAN'S VOICE
No.

Silence.

MARION (VO)
Endless time went by in silence. I felt somehow disappointed. I became depressed and after another twenty minutes of silence I began to feel angry. As I sat there, images flashed through my mind.

Marion sits transfixed in silence.

MONTAGE of images. Suggested ones of a number to be made. Stream of consciousness.

Surgical room
Surgical instruments
CLOSE UP of blind woman
CLOSE UP of people in passion, CROPPED CLOSE UP bodies.

Ken in Doctor's office. He says to Marion, a patient: "It's not your heart, it's an ulcer. I'm going to put you on a diet. In fact, what I'd really like is to take you to dinner myself. That way I can supervise it."

CLOSE UP of sheets pulled over a body.
Hand crushes a glass in it.
Some dead leaves blowing in wind.

Ken and Marion somewhere. He says: "Now come on, Marion, it's really not worth arguing about."

CUT of kiss between Marion and Larry in rain in doorway where they've sought refuge from deluge.
Hand on doorknob pulling but it won't open.
Ken and Marion dining alone in silence.

Possible birds on wing.
Spider web.
Blood running down a white wall.

Finally CUT TO Marion's face as she hears the Doctor:

DOCTOR'S VOICE
Well our time is up. Suppose I see you again tomorrow at our usual time.

SHOT of Marion watching the woman leave and get into cab.

CUT TO her and Ken out with Mark and Lydia. They are in audience of concert -- from off we hear music.

MARION (VO)
That evening there was a tension in the air. At first I thought everyone seemed a little ill at ease but soon I realized I was the one who was edgy.

CUT TO them walking home. The men have paired off and WE STAY WITH Lydia and Marion.

LYDIA
You seemed awfully tense tonight. Is something on your mind?

MARION
No. I didn't sleep well. I don't know -- lately I haven't been myself. I don't sleep as well and I find it hard to concentrate. I keep having strange thoughts.

LYDIA
Like what?

MARION
I'll tell you this, Lydia, but you mustn't say a word -- it's so crazy -- I've become obsessed with this woman who's undergoing psychoanalysis in the next apartment where I work.

LYDIA
Is that still audible through the wall?

MARION
It's like I'm hearing things I've tried to block out for years. It's just coming through the wall and I can't stop it.

LYDIA
Doesn't sound like you're getting much work done.

MARION
She touches something in me so intensely. It's caused me to have the deepest feelings and dreams and memories ... I sort of see myself in her or she in me ... I don't know what I'm saying but if I seemed tense.

LYDIA
Listen -- we turn fifty, our metabolism changes -- two more years and I'll do the same thing.

CUT TO Marion in her writing room next day.

MARION (VO)
That night I had spent a second sleepless night and by the following day I really felt it. I couldn't work at all and what little I did write was forced.
(reading)
The destruction of man's value system as a result of modern physics ...
(puts page down)
Outside it was raining. I remember sitting back in my chair thoroughly exhausted. I closed my eyes for a minute and that's when the dream must've come. At first I heard sounds through the wall.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
Why won't you speak? You haven't said a single word and your hour's almost up. I can't believe you have nothing to say. I think it's
(MORE)

DOCTOR'S VOICE (contd)
because you're angry. Too choked with rage to speak. What is it that enrages you so?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Life.

Marion slowly opens her door and wanders down the hall. Gradually she opens the door to the Doctor's office and witnesses the analysis from close.

DOCTOR
Life?

WOMAN
The universe -- the cruelty -- the injustice -- suffering of humanity -- aging -- illness -- death ...

DOCTOR
All very abstract. Humanity. Don't worry about humanity all the time -- get your own life in order.

The woman rises and exits.

Marion picks up the Doctor's pad while he's letting the woman out. She reads it. The Doctor's attention returns.

DOCTOR (contd)
What would you say she's suffering from?

MARION
Self deception.

DOCTOR
Good. It's a little general.

MARION
But I don't think she can part with the lies.

DOCTOR
No? Too bad.

MARION
Not that she doesn't want to.

DOCTOR
It's precisely that she doesn't
(MORE)

DOCTOR (contd)
want to. When she wants to -- she will.

MARION
It's all happening so fast.

DOCTOR
I've got to hurry. I'm trying to keep her from killing herself.

MARION
You don't think she would ...

DOCTOR
She's already begun.

MARION
She has?

DOCTOR
Not very dramatically. That's not her style. She's doing it slowly and methodically and has been since she was very young. And now if you'll excuse me, I've another patient.

Marion's father enters. Sits. She remains unseen.

FATHER
Now that my life is coming to a close I have only regrets. Regrets that the woman I shared my life with was not the one I loved most deeply. Regrets that there's no love between my son and myself and this is my fault. And regrets that perhaps I was too severe with my daughter ... too demanding ... perhaps I didn't show her enough feelings ...

Marion begins to exit, eventually closing door behind her but still hears the trail of talk.

FATHER'S VOICE
-- but I was so unhappy myself ... so caught up in my own stupid studies of historical figures and even though I am reknown in my field, I settled for so little.

The dream continues on a QUICK CUT to the woman walking and Marion follows through deserted streets. The woman enters the off-Broadway theatre where Claire's play was. Marion enters. An empty stage -- stylized lights.

MARION
What's going on?

WOMAN
Oh come in -- they're rehearsing.

JACK
(Claire's husband directing)
Would she like to observe the rehearsal? Claire's such a good actress. She plays innumerable roles.

MARION
(to woman)
I've never seen a show behind the scenes.

JACK
Isn't it you that once said, life is a long rehearsal for which there is no performance? Clever. Very witty.

Now an area lights up on stage and Claire plays a scene with Ken, Marion's husband.

CLAIRE
Would you ever think of making love to me on the living room floor?

KEN
Would you want me to?

CLAIRE
I don't know ... would you want to?

KEN
Somehow I don't see you as the hard-wood floor type.

CLAIRE
No? That's a pretty insulting thing to say.

KEN
Now, darling.

CLAIRE
I think it's you that's not the type to make love anywhere but in the bedroom with all the lights out.

KEN
Now who's being insulting.

CLAIRE
You're not going to turn over and go to sleep now?

KEN
It's one a.m.

CLAIRE
Look, why don't we just be honest with one another -- there's not much passion left in this marriage is there?

KEN
Is there not? I hadn't noticed.

CLAIRE
Oh don't be so aloof. I'm trying to tell you something. It's not erotic anymore.

KEN
Was it ever?

CLAIRE
Was it not?

KEN
I'm tired, Marion.

CLAIRE
But we rarely sleep together anymore and when we do it's by the book -- the same routine ... I know exactly what you're going to do and in what order.

KEN
It's true, we're both creatures of routine. Now let's go to sleep. It's late. And try not to toss or talk in your sleep. Last night you kept saying, "Larry" ... I assume you were dreaming of Larry Lewis ...

Light up another perspective. Larry and Claire, now in new role -- in warm home scene -- he holds her, caresses her. Marion observes them in love, her face touched.

Claire introduces Marion to her husband, Larry -- the Larry who loved Marion.

CLAIRE
Larry, you know Marion.

MARION
Are you married?

LARRY
Yes. You knew I got married.

MARION
Yes -- I heard.

CLAIRE
Larry wants us to move back to New York but we've had such a good time in Santa Fe.

MARION
Are you happy?

LARRY
I'm happy.

CLAIRE
I'll leave you two -- you probably have a lot to talk about.
(slips into black)

MARION
I see your by-line now and then in magazines.

LARRY
Did you read my novel?

MARION
I have it but I'm embarrassed to say I haven't read it yet.

LARRY
You inspired one of the characters.

MARION
Yes? I hope you weren't too rough on me.

LARRY
I wrote of you with great love.

MARION
Your wife is lovely.

LARRY
I met her shortly after you said goodbye to me. Her name's Jennifer. She's also quite a good writer.

MARION
Do you have any children?

LARRY
We have a little girl. She was born without sight. But it's been the greatest and most beautiful experience of my life.

MARION
Do you ever think of me?

LARRY
Do you ever think of me?

MARION
Once in awhile.

LARRY
I hope you're happy with Ken. I ran into him on the street not long ago. He must've told you.

MARION
I think of you more than once in awhile.

LARRY
But no regrets I hope. Please don't tell me you have regrets.

CLAIRE
(emerging in light)
Darling, could you come here a moment. I want to show you a beautiful sunset.

MARION
Which character in your novel did I inspire?

LARRY
Hlenka -- I gave you a beautiful name.
(MORE)

LARRY (contd)
Hlenka. I described our time together ... you'll recognize it ... But I have to go -- my wife needs me ...

And he vanishes -- a tear in Marion's eye ...

JACK
Now, now ... don't cry ... although I'm glad to hear our little scene is moving ...

MARION
I'd like to go home.

JACK
And you will. I just thought you might like to see our second act finale ... your first husband's suicide scene ... it's touching ...

Light up an older man at table -- Sam ...

MARION
Sam was not a suicide.

JACK
How do you know? It was fifteen years after you divorced.

MARION
He died in his sleep from mixing pills and alcohol. I went to his funeral.

JACK
Well you know -- that's always a grey area ... alone in a hotel room -- depressed ...

MARION
Sam was wonderful ... we had lovely times ... he taught me so much.

SAM
(under light from above)
You were a wonderful pupil. Certainly the most interesting one in my class. Still, the age difference ... I shouldn't have seduced you -- intellectually, that is -- I should have resisted that temptation --
(MORE)

SAM (contd)
because where could it lead? I shouldn't have made you adore me but when you find such a dazzling pupil, the temptation is too great ... and so I paid the price.

MARION
We paid the price.

SAM
Inevitably there comes a time when the pupil absorbs all he or she can and then what seemed like the constant, joyous imparting of knowledge and opinions becomes suffocation. Ironically that's what they wrote on my death certificate -- suffocation.

CUT TO Marion's face. Then the dream ends.

CUT TO Tom, Eleanor and Ken and Marion over dinner. Marion's off somewhere mentally.

MARION (VO)
That night we had dinner with Tom and Eleanor Banks. Doctor Banks. I was sleepwalking I was so tired. And also in a foul mood.

CUT TO them undressing for bed later.

KEN
Tom and Eleanor are funny, aren't they? The way they carry on about ESP and parapsychology -- you'd think they'd be a little more sensible. When <u>you</u> put it down so unequivocally I thought they'd die -- you were a little cruel, however correct.

MARION
I was tired -- and a little cranky ... And who knows, maybe I'm wrong -- maybe there's more to life than meets the eye. What the hell do I know?

KEN
Well their beliefs are one step ahead of ouija boards. And all that talk about their trip to Greece. God, you'd think nobody ever sailed around the Greek Islands before.

MARION
If you're so contemptuous of Tom and Eleanor, why did we go out with them?

KEN
I'm not contemptuous. It's just when they get on certain topics. Next week it'll be flying saucers.

MARION
Why do we have to see people every night? We never spend any time alone.

KEN
That's not so.

MARION
It is so. Every single night it's with friends. Yours, mine, people we meet and hardly know.

KEN
We know Tom and Eleanor for years.

MARION
And you don't even enjoy him.

KEN
Of course I do.

MARION
You've made condescending remarks to me many times because he's a radiologist which you don't take seriously.

KEN
I'm joking.

MARION
You disguise it as joking but you're serious.

KEN
Now look, Marion -- I don't know why you're provoking an argument.

MARION
We don't have arguments, we have chats.

KEN
What's wrong with you?

MARION
Why are we afraid to be alone with each other?

KEN
I didn't think we were.

MARION
Is it because we really have nothing to say to each other anymore?

KEN
We talk.

MARION
I don't mean literature or opera or our numerous humanitarian causes ... I mean us -- personally.

KEN
Marion, stop accusing me.

MARION
But it's true. We go off to work in our own separate directions and we spend what little free time we have around other people.

KEN
Please, I'm tired -- and I'm sorry -- I thought you enjoyed our social life. You certainly make the engagements as much as I do.

MARION
I know ... I'm sorry ... I've been terrible all night ... I'm just exhausted ... I can't see straight ...

KEN
Take a sleeping pill.

MARION
No -- I don't trust those things -- hold me ...

KEN
(he does)
You can hardly keep your eyes open.

MARION
I feel scared.

KEN
Overwork. You don't sleep and you're trying to synthesize European intellectual history -- you've got to take it easy.

CUT TO them asleep.

MARION (VO)
That night I slept like a dead person. I awoke the next day feeling stronger and left the house determined to get some work done -- but first things first.

CUT TO her leaving.

CUT TO her meeting sister-in-law, Lynn. Location to be determined.

MARION
(giving her a check)
Here.

LYNN
(refusing check)
I tried to phone you. It's no longer necessary -- but I want you to know how much I appreciated your kindness.

MARION
You don't need it?

LYNN
Paul and I are not going to break up.

MARION
Well -- that's good news. When did you change your mind?

LYNN
Last night.

CUT TO the scene -- Lynn and Paul in bed. He turns to her.

PAUL
Lynn --

LYNN
Yes?

PAUL
I want to take that job in Pennsylvania.

LYNN
Paul --

PAUL
No -- I mean it. I don't want you to leave me -- I want to make things different --

LYNN
But we've been over that.

PAUL
And I realize I've been wrong. You and the children mean too much to me. I want to take that job in my cousin's firm and start over. I can't live like this anymore.

LYNN
But you've been so critical of working for Andrew. How can you accept something you feel is beneath you.

PAUL
Because it's not beneath me. It's beneath Marion. My whole life I'm trying to live up to some image of me she has and I'm sick of it. I'm nothing. I'm not some great business genius in the rough. I'm a middle aged man and I can't support my family.

LYNN
Paul, you know I love you but I'd rather we separated than see you sweating at something you hate.

PAUL
I won't hate it if you and the kids
(MORE)

PAUL (contd)
are with me -- but if you're not it doesn't matter what I do. Maybe Marion can't admit I'm a failure but I can. She plays into my self-delusions because it's too painful for her own self-image to have a brother who's such a non-entity.

Lynn strokes Paul affectionately and WE CUT TO present.

MARION
I don't play into Paul's delusions. And he's not a non-entity.

LYNN
No -- it's true. He's needed so much to please you. On the one hand you pump him full of pipe dreams -- And on the other, you hold him at arm's length. I don't think you could fully accept him unless he succeeded in some way.

MARION
That's going to be different from now on. I promise.

LYNN
That would be too good to be true.

MARION
I'm so happy you're staying together. He needs you so much.

LYNN
You're an odd family -- all of you except Paul -- so distant and cold. Somehow he's the opposite side of the coin. Full of emotions he can't handle -- but I love him and I think this is our only chance.

MARION
I'll call him. I want him to know I wish him luck.

LYNN
I think that will mean a lot to him.

CUT TO Marion shopping.

MARION (VO)
I had one more errand before going in to work and that was picking up an anniversary gift for Ken. I thought it would be a simple thing but it took surprisingly long. The truth was I couldn't really think of what he might like. I was browsing in an art print store actually looking at things I'd enjoy giving more than he would like receiving and then it happened ...

Marion hears a voice behind her.

WOMAN
Um -- that's lovely.

It's the woman talking to her.

MARION
(turns -- taken aback)
Oh --

WOMAN
I own a little Nolde woodcut just like it. He's my favorite.

MARION
Yes? ... I -- I -- love German art ...

WOMAN
Yes, it's beautiful ... Are you a collector?

MARION
Me? No -- actually I'm looking for a present for someone.

WOMAN
Whata wonderful gift. There's a little Kirchner woodcut over there that's too expensive for me.

MARION
Are you a collector?

WOMAN
I would be if I could afford it.

MARION
Yes -- the best ones are so dear.

WOMAN
You know there's a wonderful print shop around the corner that has the most lovely German Expressionist things.

MARION
Where?

WOMAN
Well down the block and around the corner. I'll be glad to show you. I was just going there myself.

MARION
Oh yes -- well -- how kind of you.
(as they exit to street)
So er -- did you say you were a collector?

WOMAN
No -- I'm a painter. And when I see some of these things it inspires me and discourages me at the same time.

MARION
I understand. Incidentally, I'm Marion Post.

WOMAN
Hope Pailey.

They exit store. Walk together chatting away.

MARION (VO)
She was warm and friendly and I was drawn to her and fascinated. We looked at pictures together and discussed art.

CUT TO them in gallery looking at pictures.

WOMAN
How do you know so much about it?

MARION
My first husband taught art history and theory of aesthetics.

WOMAN
I see -- what is beautiful?

MARION
Exactly ... Is your husband an artist too?

WOMAN
Yes, but he sells -- not that you'd know him.

MARION
I see ...

WOMAN
My gosh -- is it noon already? I'm a little hungry -- would you like to have lunch?

MARION
I'd love to. We could go right over there. It looks ok.

WOMAN
Let's go to Armand's.

MARION
Armand's?

WOMAN
Do you not know it? It's a wonderful bistro right near here.

CUT TO Armand's.

MARION (VO)
Armand's was not exactly right near there but it was as charming as she said it would be and we had lunch and a bottle of wine. She couldn't drink, being pregnant so I finished the bottle. I had wanted to find out about her but in the state I was in -- it was me that couldn't stop talking.

CUT TO them lounging over their intimate lunch.

MARION
Fifty? I didn't think anything turning thirty -- everyone said I would ... then they told me I'd be crushed turning forty -- but they were wrong -- I didn't give it a second's thought ... then they said I'd be traumatized when I hit
(MORE)

MARION (contd)
fifty -- and they were right ... I'll tell you the truth, I don't think I've ever received my balance since I became fifty ...

WOMAN
Fifty's not so old.

MARION
No -- I guess not ... it's just that you look up and see where you are ...

WOMAN
You're in a good spot aren't you?

MARION
I thought I was. And then there's things gone by that you can't do anymore ... I wish I had had a child.

WOMAN
I know what you mean. At first I didn't want mine but as the months passed and I've felt it coming alive inside me I wouldn't trade it for anything. At times when I'm down and depressed, it's the thought of the baby that keeps me going.

CUT TO instant memory of young Marion and her first husband at their apartment arguing.

SAM
How arrogant! How self-centered and feelingless!

YOUNG MARION
I told you I didn't want to have a baby.

SAM
But it was partly mine.

YOUNG MARION
Except it's my life that gets derailed.

SAM
Oh I'm just destroyed ...

YOUNG MARION
You go on doing all the things you need and I have to care for it and bring it up.

SAM
We'd share the responsibility.

YOUNG MARION
That's what you say but I know it would devolve down to me.

SAM
I wanted this child.

YOUNG MARION
I told you -- it was not in my plan.

SAM
And not to consult me!

YOUNG MARION
It's my baby. Why must I consult you for every move I make? It's only your ego that's hurt.

SAM
You said you loved the idea of children.

YOUNG MARION
Some day -- not now.

SAM
But I don't have the future stretched out in front of me indefinitely.

YOUNG MARION
It's easy for you. You've done your work -- you've accomplished your goals. I'm just beginning. I want to make something of myself. It wouldn't be fair to the child.

SAM
And that you could do it without asking me -- without giving me a chance to argue you out of it.

YOUNG MARION
I didn't want to be argued out of it. We've talked it to death. It was unwanted. Do you really want to bring another soul into
(MORE)

YOUNG MARION (contd)
this world? You who hates it so much -- who's forever lecturing me on the pointlessness of existence and the cruelty of people.

SAM
(grabs her violently)
I hate you so!

YOUNG MARION
Stop it! Stop it! I can't live like this anymore. I can't.

SAM
To be capable of such a lack of feeling -- knowing how I felt -- caring only about how you felt -- your career -- your life of the mind.

CUT TO Marion's face in present.

MARION
This was a mistake of mine. I would have liked to have had a child -- but with one thing or another the time has slipped away.

WOMAN
We should go.

MARION
I've done all the talking. Maybe we could meet again and have lunch ...

WOMAN
I don't know -- we may be going away ... my husband and I ... he has some commissions in the Far East ...

MARION
Well thank you for taking me here ... I never would have known about this charming spot myself ... Um-hum ...

Now Ken comes in with Lydia -- lovers in this out of the way rendezvous. They don't see Marion but she sees them and is flabbergasted.

WOMAN
What's the matter? You've gone pale ...

MARION
N-no-nothing ...

WOMAN
(turning)
What are you looking at? Do you know them?

MARION
Who are you?

WOMAN
Is something wrong?

MARION
I've got to go ... no -- don't get up ... I need some air... I had too much wine ... please ... leave me alone ... I want to go ... thank you for lunch ...

WOMAN
Marion ...

MARION
Goodbye ...

Exits unseen by the two lovers who are unequivocally in love with one another.

CUT TO her on the street. She wanders dazed.

CUT TO her some blocks away still walking it all off.

CUT TO Marion entering her work apartment house.

CUT TO her interior. She sits, thinks, lies her head back and closes her eyes.

Presently we hear the woman's voice.

WOMAN'S VOICE
I met a very sad woman today. A woman you'd think would have everything but she has nothing. She can't allow herself to feel -- it's too frightening for her. The result is she'd led a cold, cerebral life and has alienated everyone around her. Not that she's not charming -- She's clever -- witty -- and rather highly educated but only at home in the
(MORE)

WOMAN'S VOICE
world of ideas. Consequently when I tried to talk about painting with her -- a subject she loves -- she could only lecture me on aesthetics ...

She had an abortion years ago which she regrets. She rationalizes it many ways but the truth is it was something in her that anticipated how she'd feel with a child of her own -- nursing it and taking care of it -- the emotional commitment -- the baby's helplessness -- it was too fraught with feelings. The father put it quite well when he said she liked the idea of children. But the personal -- her child -- that was too much. She's more at home with the human race than any single person.

An example is: While we were having lunch, she saw her husband with another woman -- lovers -- a close friend -- although how deeply she could know either of them if she had no inkling -- which I doubt ... She's the type who probably saw a number of hints but refused to see ...

CUT TO Marion remembering one such hint.

She approaches her husband -- she wears a terry cloth robe -- he reads.

MARION
Did you use the phone while I was in the shower? To call Lydia?

KEN
Me? No -- why?

MARION
Because just before I went in I phoned my father. And when I came out, I forgot to tell him something so I pressed Last Number Dialed and Lydia answered.

KEN
How odd ...

MARION
So Mark's out of town and we talked -- but the phone must be broken ...

CUT TO Marion in street going home from her traumatic day.

She enters her house. Ken is dressing.

KEN
Ah, Marion -- you're late.
(gives her a box)
Happy anniversary. It's tomorrow but why stand on ceremony.

MARION
I didn't know what to get you. Every occasion is a problem. I now realize it's because I don't know you well enough to pick out something for you.

KEN
As I said, I always like an opera. Y'know we're going to be late.

MARION
I'm not going anywhere.

KEN
What are you talking about?

MARION
I saw you today at a restaurant with Lydia. You didn't notice me there but I was finishing lunch when you came in.

KEN
(pause)
Oh.

MARION
In retrospect I realize this has been going on for awhile. Under my nose actually but I didn't see it.

KEN
Marion --

MARION
Actually if I had any perception
(MORE)

MARION (contd)
I'd have been suspicious from the start because we committed adultery for months when you were married to Kathy.

KEN
That was very different.

MARION
I don't think it was.

KEN
Lydia and I are only a few weeks old.

MARION
You're lying because I can remember back as far as Christmas -- things I should have seen but wouldn't let myself.

KEN
I was going to tell you. It's sad that you had to find out like that.

MARION
It's my fault.

KEN
It's nobody's fault.

MARION
Don't be so above it all. When there's a crisis you take on that controlled, calm voice.

KEN
Would you prefer we screamed at each other like your brother and his wife?

MARION
At least they feel something for each other.

KEN
I feel for you.

MARION
No -- not really -- you appreciate me -- but it's different.

KEN
You said it yourself -- we've been going through the motions of a marriage -- it happens -- how I don't know ...

MARION
We selected each other very carefully.

KEN
Meaning?

MARION
It means neither of us ever wanted a marriage that would become too close. That would be too threatening.

KEN
You're wrong. There were times I wanted nothing more than closeness with you. You never permitted it.

MARION
And I would say the same thing. That there were moments in our marriage I felt so alone but I realized we had our work and it was demanding. But we were kidding ourselves because it has nothing to do with work -- it's something else that's always been missing.

KEN
I've been in love with Lydia for almost a year now. It's been very tough on both of us -- of course because of you and Mark.

MARION
We're cursed, Ken. We crave intimacy but when it comes it's too scarey -- so we back off -- and then we're alone -- and we crave it and it goes in a terrible circle -- but I'm going to get off if it isn't too late.

KEN
I tried to communicate my feelings. I brought up the subject a number of times. You refused to hear it.

MARION
I don't doubt that.

KEN
I didn't know what to do.

MARION
(cries)
How could you betray me like that? How could Lydia?

KEN
Well -- I better call them and tell them we're not coming.

Marion weeps as scene ends.

CUT TO next day. Marion waits on a street corner in front of an office building and her brother exits, having made this appointment to see one another.

They go to a park bench and talk.

PAUL
It's ironic. Lynn and I battled and battled and we're staying together and you and Ken -- who would have thought it? So will you move out or will he?

MARION
I'm going to. I want to start a new life and not just cosmetically new -- I mean deeply new -- and part of that is you and me.

PAUL
Now Lynn and I will be off to Pennsylvania. I'll be working for Andrew.

MARION
And you're right to. And he's terrific in making that offer.

PAUL
Can you picture me a furniture salesman? But after a few years there, if all goes well, he'll be expanding here and he'd like to groom me to manage things. And I won't lose my wife and children.

MARION
I'll miss you and Lynn. I like her.

PAUL
She's always liked you.

MARION
Maybe by the time you return I'll have my life in order. Funny to be saying that at my age.

PAUL
I think it 's wonderful to find out who you are and what you want no matter how old you are. It's really only then that you can begin to live.

A warm moment and CUT TO:

Marion walking by waterfront.

MARION (VO)
I walked the streets for a week -- maybe ten days -- I can't remember. Just thinking -- putting all the pieces in place. Then, feeling better than I have in a long time, I decided the time had come to get back to my book.

CUT TO Marion entering writing apartment building.

She knocks on analyst's door. He opens it.

DOCTOR
Yes?

MARION
I'm your next door neighbor and I thought you should know that because of some acoustical oddness I can hear your patients quite clearly.

DOCTOR
Really. Well thank you. I'll take care of that. I've had the problem before. I know what to do.

MARION
By the way, you have a young woman you see, a Miss Pailey -- the pregnant one. I wonder how I could get in touch with her.

DOCTOR
Oh yes, Miss Pailey's terminated her treatment.

MARION
Oh?

DOCTOR
I believe they left rather suddenly for the Far East. I have no forwarding address.

MARION
Oh -- ok -- thank you.

CUT TO Marion in her writing room.

MARION (VO)
I resumed work -- it went well and I was undisturbed by extraneous distractions. Once, toward dusk, I paused for a break and had some coffee. As I drank, I leafed through Larry Lewis' novel which I'd never read and looked for a passage about a character named Hlenka which he based on me. After awhile I found it.

She reads aloud.

MARION
Hlenka and I ran into one another accidentally on the street.

CUT TO that shot in past. They greet.

CUT TO them at lunch.

MARION (VO)
We had lunch and I found her charming and quite lovely to look at.

CUT TO them walking.

MARION (VO)
After, since we both had time to kill, we walked around. Soon it began to rain. We ducked into a doorway to avoid the cloudburst.

They do this.

MARION (VO contd)
I remember thinking how wonderful she was and how much I loved her and how impossible it was. She kept her emotions under lock and key and far out of reach but one could tell that under many frightened and complicated layers, she was full of intense longing. I sensed that she was capable of immense love if she would just permit herself.

CUT TO Marion in present. She puts down book with a nostalgic smile.